

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
January 22, 2003
Plymouth Service Center

Draft Notes

Next meeting: March 12, 2003. Plymouth Service Center

Present: Terry Lychwick, Justine Hasz, Steve Hogler, Al Niebur, Mike Toneys, Lee Meyer, Pradeep Hirethota, Randy Link, Brad Eggold, Tom Hansen, John Kubisiak, George Boronow, Bill Horns.

1) Work planning for FY04-05

Background. Annual funding for Great Lakes fisheries field activities has been allocated in the following categories:

Special Projects – Great Lakes Fisheries Assessments -- \$102,552 of SEG funds and \$242,084 of Salmon Stamp funds.

Special Projects – Commercial Fisheries Assessments -- \$33,512 of SEG funds.

Allocations in those categories must be divided between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan (with a small amount of the commercial fishing funding reserved for the Mississippi River). Initial allocations of Salmon Stamp revenues to field projects and to fish production were cut by \$168,000 each year of the coming biennium in order to provide needed funds for Wild Rose SFH. The reduction was split evenly between field projects and production, so the Salmon Stamp allocation here is \$84,000 less than in past years. An equal cut was made in the initial allocation of Salmon Stamp funds to Fish Propagation and Stocking. The \$242,084 allocation to field projects was based on the assumption that \$84,000 in additional savings could be found in the Fish Propagation and Stocking category. Because Al Kaas had identified ways to save \$32,000, the LMFT sought to identify tolerable cuts in stocking or other propagation-related activities that would provide savings of at least \$52,000. The LMFT understood that if additional savings could be found in Fish Propagation and Stocking, the money could be added to the allocation for Salmon Stamp funded field projects.

Action. The LMFT agreed to recommend the following cuts in Fish Propagation and Stocking in order to provide adequate funding for field projects:

	lake	annual savings
• eliminate the stocking of 62,500 brook trout	Michigan	\$5,800
• eliminate the stocking of 165,000 fall fingerling brown trout of the St. Croix strain	Michigan	\$17,000
• stock all cohos produced at Bayfield as fall fingerlings (as we did this year)	Michigan	\$9,500
• eliminate the fin-clipping of steelhead not stocked in brood rivers	Michigan	\$17,000
• reduce splake production from 120,000 to 80,000, reduce brown trout production from 150,000 to 80,000, and reduce chinook production from 280,000 to 200,000	Superior ¹	\$9,500
TOTAL		\$58,800.00

Because these cuts exceed the \$52,000 target by \$6,800, the team proceeded with work planning on the assumption that the allocation for Salmon Stamp funded field projects would be \$248,884 (\$242,084 plus \$6,800). The LMFT then agreed to recommend the following project funding:

¹ These cuts were suggested by Steve Schram.

Great Lakes Fisheries Assessments	leader/author	activity code	seg \$	SS \$
feral salmonid broodstock mgmt	Hogler	FHCC	0	11823
assess brown trout strains	Hasz	FHCB	0	1700
coho/chinook broodstock mgmt	Toneys	FHHZ	0	8727
nearshore rainbow	Fassbender	FHNL	0	8500
assess yellow perch fishery	Hasz	FHCG	22300	0
assess walleye fishery	Lychwick	FHCH	4600	0
lake trout restoration/mgmt	Toneys	FHCA	0	10400
N. Pike habitat improvement	Rost	FHDN	3400	0
coho/chinook broodstock mgmt	Toneys	FHHZ	0	0
analysis of Lake Michigan data	Eggold	FHIC	0	14000
salmon and trout stocking evaluation	Eggold	FHSE	0	20000
assess yellow perch fishery	Eggold	FHCG	15122 ²	0
predation on stocked salmon	Eggold	FHJX	5000	0
Lake Michigan sport fishing surveys	Eggold	FHCR	0	95000
southern Green Bay creel survey	Lychwick	FHDO	31700	0
spotted muskellunge restoration	Hasz	FHPX	2500	0
R/V Perca maintenance	Eggold	new	3000	0
smallmouth bass	Eggold	new	3000	0
white perch in Fox River	Lychwick	new	500	0
Lake Superior	Schram	several	11430 ³	78650 ⁴
TOTALS			102552	248884

Commercial Fisheries Assessments	leader/author	activity code	seg \$	SS \$
determine commercial quotas	Toneys	FHCV	3917	0
yellow perch catch monitoring	Hawley	FHBK	12295	0
assess yellow perch recruitment	Eggold	FHHL	8000	0
funding for LMFF travel	Horns	new	2000	0
Lake Superior	Schram	FHBM	4400 ⁵	0
Mississippi River	Brecka	FHFN	2900 ⁶	0
TOTALS			33512	0

2) Lake Michigan Technical Committee meeting

Background. Mike Toneys, Brad Eggold, and Bill Horns attended the winter meeting of the Lake Michigan Technical Committee last week.

Action. This was a discussion item. Among the topics discussed at the LMTC meeting were a) cooperative acoustic forage assessments, b) formation of a lake sturgeon task group, c) Mike Jones decision analysis project, d) fish health monitoring using measures lipids and water in tissues, e) lake trout genetics, and f) ongoing research on BKD.

3) Steelhead size-at-stocking

Background. At the Lake Michigan Technical Committee meeting we heard a preliminary report regarding a Michigan State University study of steelhead genetics in Lake Michigan. The authors, Kim Scribner and Merideth Bartron, believe that, because of the size at which we stock steelhead and the location of stocking, the survival of our steelhead might be much lower than we have supposed. If

² I realized that we had \$622 of unallocated SEG money left in this category, so I added it to this project.

³ Equals funding for Lake Superior projects in FY03.

⁴ This figure reflects a reduction in Lake Superior funding proportional to the total reduction for Lake Michigan, except that savings resulting from not fin-clipping all Lake Michigan steelhead were reserved for Lake Michigan projects.

⁵ Equals funding for Lake Superior from this category in FY03.

⁶ Equals funding for the Mississippi River from this category in FY03

they are right, we should revise rearing/stocking practices. If they are wrong, we should urge them to revise the assumptions of their study accordingly.

Action. John Kubisiak briefly summarized available data showing that survival of our steelhead far exceeds that assumed by Scribner/Bartron. John Kubisiak and Steve Hogler will prepare a short analysis of the Scribner/Barton approach to estimating survival of our steelhead.

4) Statistical catch-at-age modelling

Background. Steve Schram, Paul Peeters, Brad Eggold, Justine Hasz, and Bill Horns attended a statistical catch-at-age modelling shortcourse at Michigan State University. The method has at least four applications for us – Lake Superior lake trout, Green Bay yellow perch, Lake Michigan whitefish, and Lake Michigan yellow perch.

Action. This was a discussion item.

5) Fox River NRDA projects

Background. Last week representatives of the Trustees met to discuss project for funding with NRDA money. There is some concern about the lack of fisheries projects under discussion.

Action. We scheduled a special meeting for Friday, January 31, at 10 am at the Green Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. All LMFT members are welcome to attend.

6) Rick Johnson's proposal regarding large-mesh gill nets

Background. Rick Johnson has proposed a rule change under which large-mesh gill nets would be lifted every two days during summer and fall and every five days during winter and spring.

Action. The Team did not agree to support this rule change. I will prepare a written response for Rick.

7) Marking of chinook salmon to allow estimation of natural reproduction

Background. At the LMTC meeting, we heard an analysis of the possibility of estimating natural reproduction by chinook salmon through the marking of all stocked fish. OTC marking was not encouraged, but the application of thermal marks appeared promising.

Action. We discussed the possibility of entering into a lake-wide marking program using thermal marks, and agreed that cost estimates are needed before the LMFT would recommend participating in a lakewide marking program.

8) Lake Committee reports

Background. Our annual compilation of management reports for the Lake Michigan Committee will be needed soon.

Action. Annual reports are due to me March 1.

9) FH Board consideration of live-fish transport

Background. The FH Board will meet January 28-29. Included on the agenda is a discussion item to be presented by Lee Meyers regarding the movement of exotic fish by anglers and potential regulation changes to restrict angler transport of live fish.

Action. Lee Meyer will prepare an issue brief on this subject for presentation at the FH Board meeting.